

Damage Control by Nellycoo

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Language: English

Characters: Dustin Henderson, Eleven (Stranger Things), Jim "Chief" Hopper, Jonathan Byers, Joyce Byers, Lucas Sinclair, Mike Wheeler, Nancy Wheeler, Steve Harrington, Will Byers

Relationships: Jim "Chief" Hopper/Original Female Character(s), Jim "Chief" Hopper/Other(s), Joyce Byers & Jim "Chief" Hopper

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Summary:

Officer Emily Beckett is the newest member of the Hawkins Police Dept. and her disdain towards her Chief is hard to contain. Fearful that the monotony of her new life would drive her mad, she starts poking her nose in places Jim Hopper doesn't need or want her to. However her time spent with Hopper causes her to become undeniably attracted to his rough and dark personalty, which leads her to fall into a battle with her morals.

1. Arrival

I hung my police academy certificate up in my bedroom with an air of pride. The night had drawn in quickly, well it seemed that way anyway. Thank god the snow had subsided a little, but it was still beyond freezing, I couldn't stop shivering as I slumped down onto the bed, still taking in the fact that tomorrow morning I was gonna start my new job as a cop in a tiny town.

I still couldn't quite grasp as to why they sent me here of all places. I mean, I graduated with the highest honors, surely the big city would have made more sense, as far as I was aware this town was pretty quiet. Petty theft, drunken violence and vandalism would most likely be on the agenda, but I was ready for the big time. Alas, a job is a job....but it still stung for me to say goodbye to my family. I threw myself back on the cold hard mattress and stared up at my discoloured ceiling and listened to the bowling alley below me rattle and shake with noise and commotion. I couldn't afford one of the nicer places in town, but had just enough to cover the deposit for this place, dank and miserable, but it's my home, Hawkins was my home now.

6am came like a freight train. Felt like I hadn't slept more than an hour, the mixture of the noise downstairs and my nerves got the better of me. I was never one for tardiness though so I was up and in the shower by 6:10.

The water took too long to heat up, so I showered in tepid water, I was growing more and more tense the longer I stood under the shower head, waiting for the suds to drain away, much like my positivity for the day.

With a towel wrapped around my head and my toothbrush hanging from my mouth I just watched myself in the mirror, with a dead look

in my eyes.

Good god girl get a grip I thought as I finally decided to finish brushing my teeth.

I stood in my bedroom completely naked when it hit me. I remembered I was to pick my uniform up at the station. Great....I had controlled my nerves long enough, but the thought of turning up in my street threads was causing a spiral I couldn't stop. In some kind of rage I yanked my clothes out of a suitcase and began to lay them out. A pair of high waist jeans that were faded at the knees and a red flannel blouse would have to do.

I dried my thick black hair and tried desperately to comb it down, I pushed it back and decided to live with it. I turned to look at the chaos that was the apartment around me, it was hard to imagine this place ever looking like a home. Enough I thought, you gotta leave now before you change your mind.

I grabbed my coat, my messenger bag and keys, bolted out the door and down the staircase.

The metal staircase that connected my new home to the bowling alley was a fucking hazard, but a small part of me wished to slip on the ice and avoid going to work.

My dark green 1973 Oldsmobile Delta 88 sat under a cover just by the side of the road, she was a gift from my late father and was my pride and joy. And this fucking cold weather wasn't going to do her any good. I prayed to who ever you had to pray to to make sure she started. I gripped the wheel with one cold hand as the other turned the key over and over again.

“Come on Lady you know it's my first day....COME ON COME ON COME ON” I screamed as the engine suddenly roared and revved.

“Thank you”

I followed the crappy directions to the station some guy in the bowling alley gave me, of course he didn't believe me that I was a cop, a female cop in Hawkins, god forbid. I shivered uncontrollably the whole way, a mixture of fear and the cold, but in all honesty it was mostly fear. The streets were already busy with school kids, people on their way to work. It was nice to see this quiet town busy. Turning up yesterday evening maybe wasn't the best idea, it was nice, the people seemed...nice.

Felt like that nice would be the only word I used to describe this situation. I shook off the thought and before I knew it I was parked outside the police station. I slammed the door of Lady, I guess it was my way of dealing with my overloading anxieties.

“Sorry girl....see you soon”

I patted her hood apologetically and began to make my way to the building before me. I walked in slowly and saw a woman, perhaps early 50's, standing on some rickety old step ladder by the front desk, carefully taking down Christmas decorations.

“Good Morning” My voice croaked and cracked, as I watched the woman slowly step down from the stool and adjust her glasses.

“New recruit I assume, I'm Flo” I gripped my messenger bag and nodded a couple times. I watched as she grabbed a clip board and ordered me to sign in.

“Emily Becket” I cleared my throat once more and scribbled my name in. I felt her stare at me, god this was already hell. At least it was a little warmer inside.

“You've come straight from the academy right?”

“Yeah...yes...sorry....”

“And what do you know about Hawkins?”

“Not a lot Mam', if I'm being honest I assumed I would be stationed in the city I trained in, not....” Flo scoffed before I could finish, I furrowed my brow then continued. “Sorry I...”

“You called me Mam'....just not used to such pleasantries round here...but Flo will be just fine Officer”

I felt super weird being called Officer. I suppose I was, well not officially, needed my badge and my gun I guess. Had to meet the Chief too....I wondered how much of a delightful character he was.

“Sure, is the Chief in yet....uh....” I fiddled through my bag to find my paper work. “Hopper?”

Flo laughed at me. I didn't get the joke.

“You can wait in his office if you want, but it'll be a little while before he shows up my dear”

I cocked an eyebrow and followed her into the main station where I noticed two officers sitting and talking quietly.

“Callahan, Powell, the new recruit is here looking for the Chief” I looked down at the blue shirts they wore and the dark brown pants. They laughed out loud then the laughter subside as they finally looked up at me.

“Officer Beckett?” One of them pointed his mug at me. He looked beyond confused. I wanted a hole to swallow me. I slipped my jacket off and held onto it tightly.

“Yes, Indiana state Police Academy and yes I am not a dude”

“You trained at the State Academy?”

“That's correct”

“So why they dump ya here” Coffee boy wore glasses and had this....moronic look across his face. I pursed my lips together then exhaled heavily.

“I'm sure there's a good reason....”

“Maybe it was because of all that Hawkins lab shit that went down, this town is famous ya know” my interest grew tenfold.

“Enlighten me” Instead of answering me he pointed to the pin board behind him where a few more officers stood. I slipped past and looked at it carefully.

THE BOY WHO CAME BACK TO LIFE

“Former missing child Will Byers has been found after a week of searching” I read under my breath. “Subject of a secret government program run by the Hawkins National Laboratory”

I stood up straight and cleared my throat.

“So...where's his office” I clapped my hands together, in a desperate attempt to hide my....fears...worries....curiosity maybe. Flo signaled me over with her index finger and I stepped back across the room and down the corridor to Chief Hoppers office.

“I'll get you some coffee, maybe a magazine....trust me he won't be here anytime soon” I stepped into the office, it smelt of cigarettes and cheap cologne, the desk was a mess and nothing was in order.

“Coffee, milk and 2 sugars please” I slouched back in the worlds most uncomfortable chair and waited....and waited....and waited.

2. The Meeting

Summary for the Chapter:

After waiting longer than expected, Beckett and Hopper finally meet.

I glanced up at the clock, 10. An hour and a half had passed, I had finished my coffee and read through every piece of paper work I had in my bag and this asshole still wasn't here. I stood up and walked round to his side of the desk. I ran my hands over his typewriter, some newspaper clippings, I slid a file across and noticed some colour....a picture...crayoned...by a child it seemed.

I scrunched my face up as I went to pick it up, until I heard commotion coming from the front of the station. I quickly pushed everything back and hurried to the other side of the desk.

“She's been here since 8:30 Chief”

“Yeah and I had something to attend to, I'm sure she'll get over it”

I heard this grumble echo through the corridor. I held my hands behind my back as my eyes fixated on the doorway, waiting for him to appear. He stopped dead in the doorway, and just stared at me. He seemed....disappointed in a way. Wouldn't be the first time a man has ever looked at me like that.

Tall, early to mid 40's at least....needed a shave, and some sleep. He was handsome in a...rough and worn out kind of way I guess. He was wide in the chest and shoulders, not a fat guy but....certainly a broad guy, intimidating as all hell. But I wasn't going to let him know that.

“Chief Jim Hopper, Emily Beckett” I yanked my hand from behind my back and stuck it out. He looked down at it for a moment then back at me. Why the shit was he not shaking my hand. Pull it back....PULL IT BACK I internally screamed at myself. He grabbed it tightly, his hand squeezed my hand hard enough to break it almost.

“Flo go grab Beckett's uniform for me” He softly called to her as she

sauntered off. He stepped into the room fully, taking off his coat and hat as I continued to stand and stare.

“You...can sit Beckett it's fine” I nodded and sat down, sitting up right....nervous....tense...pissed off....the list was never ending. He didn't say a word, he stomped past me and sat down behind his desk in a loud groan and a slump. I can imagine this dude emptied a whole bottle of scotch into his bloodstream last night, woke up about half an hour ago then decided, I was worth his time.

“You got your uh...” He twitched his fingers back and forth, signalling for me to pass him my paperwork. I passed over my files as he snatched them from my grip. I clenched my teeth together trying to hold back any visible disdain.

“So....10 o'clock...” I clenched. Not sure where I was going with my snide remarks, although an anxious person, I found myself to be cheeky in times of stress, great way to deal with anxiety, give yourself more of it.

His eyes, drenched in anger and exhaustion looked up at me from the paperwork. A scowl rested on his face. Great.

“I had a personal matter to deal with”

“But Flo...”

“Flo says a lot of things, but I am you're superior not her got it kid, ok....” His voice was low, deep and gravelly and it sounded like he'd had enough of me already.

“Here you go” Flo's sudden appearance snapped me out of my angry and distressed trance as she passed me my uniform, folded to perfection.

“Thanks” I said in almost a whisper, then turned back to face Hopper.

“Did they ever give you a reason why they sent you to me Beckett?” Hopper finally said something other than a tired groan or a cough.

“No Chief, your guess is as good as mine”

“No idea, I mean with stats like these Beckett, you should be a detective in the city...I mean do you even wanna be here” He threw down my paperwork and leaned forward, his eyes burned into mine with something different this time. Jesus I couldn't stop obsessing with how blue they were, it was kinda haunting.

“Sure I do” I responded instantly. I wasn't looking to get fired on my first fucking day.

“Right....go get changed, I'm gonna finish my coffee then we'll start” He pointed to the door, I didn't hang around and headed straight for the locker room.

I slammed the locker in front of me hard, then kicked the one below it. I sighed and checked to see if my boots were scuffed, I didn't want to give that grumpy drunk giant any more reasons to hate me. The blue shirt surprised me by fitting better than I expected. The pants were tighter around the hips than anticipated but I didn't hate the way my ass looked in them. The hat wasn't my cup of tea but I knew that even State Troopers had to wear them so....I wasn't too upset about it. I held my hat tightly as I slowly made my way back to Hopper's office. He made my stomach ache with worry and stress, and I'd only known him half an hour, most men make me feel that after at least a week.

I knocked on the open door, I watched him stand up messily, slipping a pack of cigarettes in his top shirt pocket. I caught him staring at me again. I sucked in my pinkish bottom lip with my arms once again neatly behind my back.

“Ok....looking....ok so”

I screwed my face up a little then watched him stroll past me leading me throughout the station. He towered over me, and I was pretty tall for a girl. My long legs always gave me the advantage when it came to the bleep tests during my training. I watched the back of his head as he barked different things at me halfheartedly. For a moment I thought I could do this guys job better than he could.

We stopped at the weapons cage, he jangled his keys in frustration, I

watched his face turn and twitch as he tried to find the right one. I smirked to myself at his hindrance.

My firearm was issued to me as was my badge, we stood close enough that I could smell stale beer and smoke, the cage itself was tiny and freezing cold. I sighed heavily and tied my gun holster through my belt loops tightly, trying not to elbow him in the stomach or chest.

“That your Delta out front” I wasn't expecting the question, not even a little bit. I stepped back as far as I could away from him and nodded silently. “My dad had a Oldsmobile, not that model but...was a great car” He grinned to himself slyly, still playing with his keys.

“They're bitches to take care of right?” I crossed my arms leaning against a cabinet.

“Tell me about it, I stole my dads all the time...was a nightmare to jump start” He laughed a little to himself, I laughed, but I figured it was mostly nervous laughter.

“Look you can shadow me a little today, I'm supposed to stick you with one of the boys but...” I cocked an eyebrow once more then pressed my tongue against the inside of my cheek. Despite the disdain I felt, I couldn't contain my playfulness.

“Alright Chief, so does that mean watching you smoke in your office till some old lady needs help getting some kids off of her lawn”

“Don't underestimate Hawkins Beckett, it's a nightmare really....” He looked down at his hands for a moment, then back up at me. His smiles and smirks had faded at that look of sadness re-appeared in his eyes.

“Yeah the guys out front said something about a boy...” He cut me off by clearing his throat and stretching.

“We should get going” he almost knocked me over bolting out of the weapons cage. Perhaps it was something I said.

There was this feeling eating away at me, something was way off about this guy and it wasn't his controlled substance abuse. I wasn't a

perfectly functioning human being, but I knew what I had to do to remain at least remotely sane. The guys around here had no idea what I was capable of, and perhaps a part of me wanted to show them that. I dragged my feet to find wherever Hopper had gone. He was asking Flo for any messages, calls....complaints....I noticed he was wearing a Hawkins police jacket...I was not issued one. I rolled my eyes and rubbed my arms at the thought of the cold outside.

“Hey Beckett” Hopper called me over. “You got a jacket?” I looked around and cleared my throat.

“No Chief I must have forgotten to put it on my inventory”

I didn't, I rarely make mistakes....but I didn't want to dump anyone else in it, especially if Flo had made a mix-up; she was actually kind of sweet. My eyes darted from her back to Hopper, he let out this kind of for gods sake sigh as he slipped off his own jacket and handed it to me.

“Flo get her damn coat before I catch a cold, convenience store right?”

“Yeah the one Joyce works at” Flo's tone was playful and the boyish gleam in his eye suggested that “Joyce” was someone he was most certainly banging or wanted to bang at least.

3. Curiosity

Summary for the Chapter:

Beckett's curiosity grows, or is it just boredom? Either way she begins to find it difficult to accept her new life in Hawkins.

The coat was huge on me, but I was just grateful for the warmth as we left the station and headed for his Police Blazer. He paused at the driver's side and glared across at me. I stood uneasy as I gripped the door handle with anticipation.

"We'll stop at the store, follow up on the phone call then we'll do a quick drive around town, so when get back to the station you can do paper work all afternoon for making me give you my damn jacket" that tone, I thought to myself how I had to suck it up and get used to hearing it. But yet, my lack of respect for this man caused my brain to step "off script" and my cheekier side continued to seep out.

"Come on Chief...I didn't make you" He grunted and got in the car, I followed suit.

He pulled a cigarette out from the top of his shirt slowly and placed it between his lips tightly, he offered me one, I declined.

"Fine give me the coat back then" He smirked sparking up.

"Yeaaaah...I'm keeping the coat"

He never responded, he remained sullen as he began to pull out of the parking lot.

The silence was painful, I just stared out the window, thinking of home, my real home back in the city. I did feel this homely warmth from Hawkins sometimes, but most of the time, it was this sinking feeling, a dark cloud that hung over this town and it was bothering me every single time I thought about it.

The car jolted to a sudden halt, I snapped forward and smashed my hands onto the dashboard to ease myself. We had arrived at our

destination it seemed.

"Damn Chief...." I balled my fists as glared at him. Was this fool still drunk? I thought as I shuddered and exited the car without hesitation.

With the ridiculously oversized coat on I shuffled next to Hopper slowly as I was still looking for some kind of apology. Silence remained between us as we entered the threshold of the store.

"Morning Jim" a few people called over to him, I looked around frantically trying to get a good feel of the place.

"Hop!" Hopper froze at the sound of his name, a small woman ran up from an aisle, her short messy dark haired bounced as she rushed towards the two of us. She looked pleased to see him, I couldn't understand why.

"Joyce, I assume the call came from you"

"Nothing too serious...we caught a couple kids skipping school and stealing, they're in the office...need you to give them a little shakedown if you know what I mean" Hopper looked frustrated for a moment, a beat cop could have come over here and given the scare them straight act....but, there was no way the Chief was going to say that to this Joyce woman, the way he looked at her with kind eyes, it was obvious.

"Joyce this is the newest member of Hawkins police, Officer Beckett" I yanked the sleeves up of the coat and shook her hand firmly.

"Pleasure to meet you Miss"

"Joyce will be fine, have you been in Hawkins long?"

"About 24 hours...." we both shared a brief laugh, albeit slightly awkward. It was nice to see a genuine smile from someone I have to say.

"She came straight from the capital, was assigned here" As Joyce and Hopper continued their conversation my mind was working overtime. Byers....Byers....that name, she was the mother of the boy who went missing. Puzzle pieces were only slightly beginning to fit together,

but I was getting somewhere, my mind turned and churned with theories and thoughts, I had to know more. I held back my curiosities for the time being and shot my self back to reality. I caught the tail end of their conversation.

“He's getting better....nightmares still a constant though....Wow, so you lived in the city! must be weird being in a tiny town like this now....you live nearby” Joyce turned to me once more. I nodded half smiling.

“Bowling ally, the apartment above, it's dank and small but, it's home I guess” I smiled my warmest sweetest smile, putting on the charms, airs and graces, you name it. It was working, she seemed to be warming up to me. She turned her attention back to Hopper, there was something there and it was kind of sweet watching them interact, boring....but sweet.

After the most monotonous amount of police work I'd ever experienced we headed straight back to the station. My punishment for smart mouthing him and taking his jacket was to commence as I sat and did paper work on the worlds most unruly typewriter. I slumped down at the desk and felt Hoppers large coarse hand slam onto my shoulder and grip tightly. I smirked a little and looked up with him.

“You will sit here, and you will type up these reports until I say you can go home Beckett, do not disturb me, and in the future do not smart mouth me alright”

“Yes Chief” I said in a kind of submissive tone, mocking him....I think. He stomped out of the room and down to his office where I heard and felt the door slam.

Darkness came quickly and my first day was almost over, I hoped. Every time he came to my desk during the rest of my shift I tensed up, please send me home....please....I begged internally, but my fingers continued to press aggressively on the type-writer and I remained obedient and silent as he just hovered over me to torture me. Hearing his boots one final time stop towards my desk filled me

with hope that it was my time to leave. I pulled my aching wrists from the type-writer and looked up at him.

“Beckett....you can go but I'm gonna need you to do the night shifts over the weekend, the boys have got their poker evening and so seeing as....” I bit down on my lip, then interrupted.

“No problem Chief, you all have families and...prior engagements here, I haven't got anything planned” except wallowing in self pity I thought to myself sighing.

“Well I wasn't really asking Beckett but....thanks, sign out, and I'll see you tomorrow for change over” he once again gripped my shoulder and then left the building not a minute too soon. I sat in the dimly lit room and just contemplated for a moment. I was struggling to except that this was my home now, as mysterious as Hawkins was to me it was still so very cut and dry.

Why did they send me here. I rubbed my brow as I clocked the newspaper article that caught my eye earlier. The Byers boy....that curiosity itch flared up like a mother, maybe just a peek at the file. Seemed like Flo was finishing up, distracted, I had a chance. I slipped over to the cabinet and began to flick through. The filing system here was terrible, nothing like the precinct I trained at back home.

Eventually I found one Byers folder. Lonnie Byers had a rather thick file, quite a few domestics disturbances, illegal gambling, he must be the father I thought. I shut the cabinet with the up most of ease, making sure I didn't draw much attention, and just as the night team were coming from the bitter cold outside I slipped the file into my messenger bag. I maintained my poker face to the best of my abilities as I hastily made my way out of the building.

“Goodnight Flo, see you tomorrow”

“How was your first day” I wasn't expecting much of a retort but, I obliged, she'd been nice to me today too. I gripped my bag strap tightly and sighed.

“Great” I tried to hide the sarcasm. This woman could read me like a book. I raised my brows and half smiled in her direction.

"He's been through a lot, anything that may seem harsh or cold, its just him dealing with his own demons and pain....he's a good man he's just....the Chief" I tilted my head in curiosity and nodded.

"What happened?" I couldn't control that need to know everything, now more than ever.

"He lost a child a while back, he hasn't been the same nor will he be ever again....but don't mention anything ok, I only told you because you need to understand why he is the way he is. You impress him though, I can tell"

"Yeah because sticking me on the night shift shows that's accurate" I scoffed at her, she scowled then rolled her eyes.

"Like I said, he is....just the Chief, goodnight Beckett" she patted my shoulder and let me pass. I hurried to my car, making sure I didn't slip over. She started with no problems, and I felt blessed for a moment. Until I got home. I entered my new abode, surrounded by all I possessed, and in all honesty there wasn't much.

My entire life fitted into a few boxes in a dank cold apartment, it hit me. Quite suddenly in fact. I slumped onto my couch and gently sobbed. I pressed the palms of my hands into my eyes, hard. I suppose I was trying to deny that this was happening, trying to push the tears back in. I missed my Mom, I missed my friends.....this town was bullshit and my position was bullshit.

I exhaled heavily and pulled my sodden hands from my face. I needed a drink, I needed to fuck I needed some kind of relief. I thought about going down to the bar below me, but the thought of being around the citizens of Hawkins filled me with dread. I stepped over my unpacked boxes cautiously and slumped down in front of one box that said fragile. Despite the inscription, it was a little beat up, but my bottle of scotch was in one piece. I sighed looking down at it like a proud mother who had just seen her new born for the first time. My Father was supposed to give it to me when I graduated the Academy, but it ended up being my Mother in the end. It was Dad's preferred brand of scotch, and I guess he thought it would be mine. I was more of beer and cocktail type of girl. As much as I was aching for a drink, this was too special to swig in sorrow. So I popped on

some coffee, and began to go through Lonnie Byers file, hoping I could find something, anything.

4. The Nightshift

Summary for the Chapter:

Beckett experiences her first ever night shift, and is introduced to some of Hawkins brightest young minds.

My night shifts started at 6pm and finished at 6am, and I was to do these hours for the next 3 days. I pushed open the doors, shaking the walls around me. I paused for a moment, took a deep breath and carried on through to the bull pen. I stopped in the door way where Callahan, Powell and a few other officers I hadn't been introduced to were laughing like they were fucking around in the locker room. Their laughter faded when they spotted me.

“Hey Beckett” they mumbled in my direction.

“Evening” I walked through and dumped my bag by an empty desk. They discussed their plans as I switched on my police radio and tried to drown them out. I prayed for them to just leave, leave me to get on with my damn shift.

“Beckett” the sound of my name leaving Jim Hoppers lips caused my entire body to tighten as I straightened my back and tensed my shoulders.

“Chief” I tapped a pencil against the janky radio before me, unsure whether or not to even look at him. I felt his hand rest on my back, his fingertips pressing against my clenched muscles. I exhaled heavily, yet I still refused to look up at him.

“You've got a couple officers here with you tonight, but if there is an emergency....which there won't be, my number is on speed dial” his voice rumbled down at me.

“Super” Was all I responded with, I thought of some quip to retort with but I felt it was best to just keep it simple and short. He grunted and left the room, wishing everyone a good evening. I could still feel his hand on my back, it was bittersweet, I shouldn't have enjoyed it

but I did. I shut down as the others shuffled out one by one leaving me and a few nameless officers alone.

I got lost in my mind for quite sometime, which was never a good idea. It got dark in there, really dark.

“Did you come here alone” a voice echoed, I ignored it at first and continued with my thoughts, then it called again. I blinked and saw a scrawny officer walking over to me with a cup of coffee piping hot in hand. He was tall and thin, didn't look like the cop type, but then again I shouldn't judge.

“What do you mean” I rubbed my brow and leant back in my chair.

“Did you move to Hawkins alone?” He stood over me and it bothered me.

“Yes...why would I want to bring any of my loved ones to this town”

“Hey, it's not all that bad”

“Yeh I forgot you had the missing dead kid come back to life...or whatever” I played it off like I wasn't even bothered by it, but it did. Lonnie's file just gave me indication that he was just a scum bag low-life who mistreated his kids and wife. It looked like I was going to haven to actually get to know the Byers in order to find out what I wanted to know.

“No one has been the same since, especially that poor kid....heard Joyce had to pull him out of school for a little while coz of the damage it did to him”

“The experiments?” I sat up, maybe scrawny cop was going to be more interesting to talk to than I thought.

“Oh yeah big time, but what's really weird is that you ever bring it up in front of Hop....he just shuts ya down, gets all weird and closed off, more than usual” I tried so very hard to hide any kind of intrigue on my face. I nodded silently and just shrugged.

“That guy is a joke, no offence but....how is he the Chief of Police”

“Look past the mental anguish and substance abuse, he's a damn good cop, he found Will, even though he won't talk about it, the guys a damn hero”

“Sure” I nodded leaning back again. Before any more was said a call came out, two officers requested by Hawkins High, some kids acting suspicious near the grounds.

“Guess that's our cue” I pushed my self up from the creaky chair and grabbed my hat and coat.

“I'm Officer Miller by the way” He finally introduced himself. I nodded and shook his hand tightly.

“Beckett” and that was that. I sat in the front of the cruiser trying so desperately to get warm while Miller drove very cautiously to Hawkins Middle School. I won't lie I felt anxious, despite pigeon holing this town as quiet and quaint, I wasn't sure what to expect when we pulled up outside.

“It's not a big building, so you check out the left side, I'll scope the right, we'll meet at the rear” I nodded towards Miller holding my flash light in a death like grip. Already I could hear a commotion, sounded like kids arguing. I proceeded with slight caution, making sure the kids didn't bolt as soon as I got a look at them. They were trying to cut through a fence, but were having some kind of disagreement about it.

“We need to go into the woods like Jonathan said” one exclaimed, trying to keep his voice as low as possible.

“No....this is where she disappeared it has to be here” another replied, also hushed.

“HEY” I called out shining my torch on them. The 3 of them froze and held up their hands.

“It's ok I'm a cop...well not for you 3...” I jested slightly, still beaming my torch directly at them. “Hand over the bolt cutters, and we'll go talk in the squad car”

“You're not a cop, I've never seen you around before” one of them

tried to be smart. He was right, I was new, and people were still yet to get used to me being around.

“Lucas shut up” The curly haired one groaned at his friend.

“No he's right Dustin, I don't know her...for all we know she's from the lab posing as a cop” I cocked my eyebrow.

“Mike...SHUT UP”

“Ok all of you shut up....kid hand me the bolt cutters before I get Officer Miller and we actually charge you with breaking and entering” the kid named Lucas slid over the bolt cutters. Keeping my torch on them I bent over and picked it up...

I radioed over to Miller and told him I had the kids in the back of the car. They all shivered and sniffed so I turned the heating up as much as I could.

“See...I am an actual cop...not posing as one....what the hell are you doing here?”

They all sat silently, staring at me with hatred burning in their eyes. “Ok we're gonna plead the 5th...look I know for a fact you 3 were not there to just break in and trash the place....you 3 were looking for someone” I played it cool, acting like I didn't overhear their conversation. I watched them all shuffle uncomfortably. “and you....said something about a lab” I pointed to the Mike kid, pale freckle faced kid, who seemed desperate to just get home. “You thought I was from the lab....has this got something to do with Will?” “No...Will's fine....just”

“Dude” Lucas nudged Mike. I ssshed him and pointed at Mike again.

“We were looking for another friend, we thought we could sneak in to find her, but they put in this chain-link fence, coz kids from the high school kept breaking in, so we had no choice”

“Well if someone is missing you should report it to us” I kept my tone as calm as possible.

“Look we learned our lesson can you just take us home so our parents can ground us for a millennia” Dustin chirped in. I sighed and rolled

my eyes. I caught Miller walking back up to the car, so I cut my interrogation short. I gave Lucas his bolt cutters back.

"I'm not taking you home, seeing as you 3 are clearly not the law-breaking types, and you seem to be involved in the most elaborate game of hide and seek ever, slap on the wrist will do.... I don't wanna see you causing shit again though, or I will have you at the station answering real questions got that"

They all nodded silently. I let them out one by one, and when I got to Mike, I said just a few things to him.

"If you're still worried about your friend just come find me at the station, ask for Officer Beckett and maybe I can help" He nodded without saying another word and hurried over to his bike along with his pals.

"The Wheeler kid...is friends with Will...I wonder what they were doing here" Miller sat in the drivers seat as I began to work out what it all meant.

"They were just hanging out....nothing illegal, told em to scram before I "arrested" them" I chuckled to myself, putting on the airs and graces. Miller scoffed then started to drive off back to the station.

"You're not gonna tell Hopper about me letting the kids go?" I poured some fresh coffee and watched Miller in the corner of my eye. He shook his head and laughed softly.

"They got home safe, I can't see a problem with that" I nodded once then slid off back to the desk I sat at before. I started scrawling down the names, Lucas....Dustin...Mike...I had to get as much information as I could. I had to keep my brain functioning, otherwise I would truly go insane.

5. The Whispers in Aisle 4

Summary for the Chapter:

The plot surrounding Hawkins thickens for Emily as a trip to the store leaves her even more interested in what her Chief of Police gets up to out of hours.

There wasn't even another call, the entire fucking night I sat there and watched the others fall in and out of sleep, play checkers and crossword puzzles. I shared a few stories with Miller, he was a decent guy, didn't see me as this oddity in his world, I was a cop, just as much as he was.

6am was looming, the sweet release of home called to me. I decided to get some fresh air and watch dawn begin to break.

"Hey...Beckett...we're gonna head into town and get breakfast....you're welcome to come" Miller stood behind me as I kicked gravel in a juvenile manor.

"Thanks man but I'm super burned out, but maybe tomorrow morning" he nodded and patted my shoulder. I watched him and the others file out while I slipped back inside and waited for the change over, as much as I tried to fight it, I nodded off in my chair.

"Hey..Beckett?" my eyes fluttered open, and the crick in my neck was in full effect. I sat up and stretched, and noticed Flo standing before me.

"Morning Flo...." I croaked and pushed myself from the chair slowly. I bent over groaning and picked up my bag.

"Are you ok driving home?" I nodded waving my hand.

"I'll be fine, I can wait till the others come in"

"No it's ok, you look drained first time doing the night shift will do that to ya, much going on last night" She rinsed out the coffee pot and put in a new filter. I watched intently with my left eye as I rubbed my right.

"Couple of disturbances but all dealt with, ended up helping Miller with his crossword most of the night"

"Some nights you'll get a bar fight, some nights not a peep, just the way they go" I nodded in response and started heading for the door.

"Alright Flo...I'll catch you later" I stumbled towards the door and headed for Lady. Frost covered her, but no new layer of snow.

I rolled the window down and let the cold air blast me in the face as I drove home as fast, but as safe as possible, I had to stay awake as best I could, had to make it home. I slowed at a set of traffic lights by some houses just near the grocery store. I glanced over at one house in particular. I wasn't sure why I looked at the building but I did, and what I saw took me by surprise a little. Hopper exited the house with a short blonde lady bidding him farewell in the doorway. She wore this horrendous pink and black kimono, it was hard to miss. They kissed, then he headed for his car. The sound of horns screeching behind me tore me from my day-dream. The light was green, it was time to head the fuck home.

The image of Hopper leaving a one night stand got me thinking. Obviously he enjoyed the company of women, but from what I heard and knew about him already he wasn't the type to settle down.

The way he stomped around that station gave me the notion that he was this womanising jerk, and he knew it. But then again the way he acted around Joyce the other day....it all didn't make much sense. Throw in what Miller said about him saving the Will Byers kid and being reserved about it. My mind would not stop, which was what I wanted most of the time. But when I got home and crashed onto my bed, it wasn't welcome. I wanted silence and darkness for at least 4 hours, I set an alarm and it was lights out.

The voice of Dionne Warwick blasted my ear drums as I bolted up and snatched my clock radio so hard I almost ripped it out of the wall. I looked at the time, I had to get some food and at least a bucket of caffeine in my system before my shift started. It was still light, and there was no sign of new snow fall, I decided to venture out into Hawkins, grab some groceries, try to be a normal member of society. No matter how small and secretive it may be.

I walked through the grocery store in some kind of daze, looking for anything but nothing at all, I suppose my mind was still incredibly

preoccupied. I stood by the loaves of bread and poked at them mindlessly, until my ears overheard familiar voices. I tried to listen as carefully as I could. That deep rough voice of my boss and a softer yet worrisome voice went back and forth.

“Kids at school are constantly asking Will questions, the boys are still looking for her”

“I've handled it, it will be handled”

“What do you mean you're handling it?”

“Trust me Joyce, no one will know about it” My back tensed up as I dug my fingers into a loaf, almost breaking the plastic wrapped around it.

“Mam' are you gonna buy that bread or just....molest it?” A grouchy male clerk watched me as he was repricing a stand. I ripped my hand away and scurried almost towards the checkout. I slammed my basket down.

“Paper or plastic”

“What?” was all I replied, my head spinning left to right, looking over my shoulder. I didn't want to be seen. It wasn't much, it could be completely innocent, or it could be completely sinister. I had a feeling she was involved, her son did go missing after all, and the mystery surrounding it, you'd be pretty stupid not to work it all out. I struggled with the door as my paper bags began to rip and sag. I cursed and tried to control my breathing. Stay calm Emily....stay calm I thought over and over again as I gripped my keys in my hand. I took a few deep breaths in and out then my door popped open. I placed my bags in the passenger seat and began to get into my car.

“Beckett” I knew he'd seen me....he must have seen me dash out of the store, I made it so fucking obvious.

I pushed my hand through my messy hair and turned and lent back on my car. I noticed he was in his street clothes, which consisted of a pair of worn out jeans with oil stains on them, boots and a heavy black winter coat on with some brown plaid sticking out underneath it.

“Chief” I half smiled and rubbed my eyes, Jesus I was tired, I needed a break and it was only the 3rd day.

“How did last night go” He played with a lighter, somewhat anxiously. I chose to ignore it.

“Fine, slow but fine, are you off today or something”

“Yeah I was just visiting Joyce, checking up on Will and Jonathan”

“So he does have a heart” can't say I fully thought through what I said, but it was better than me just nodding silently. I pointed to his chest and my half smile turned into a full one. He smiled back and nodded.

“I'll see you later Beckett” was all he said until he slipped off towards his car. My heart was in my stomach the whole time, bubbling in the acid and causing each knot in my gut to twist tighter. I once again took a few deep breaths and entered my car. I was home in no time, and I began processing fully what I had just heard.

6. The Plan

Summary for the Chapter:

Beckett has heard enough! Her inner Sleuth is aching to come out and she must find a way to get the answers she's looking for. Does she play it cool and sneak around? or does she get close to Jim in ways she'd never dream of!

I remembered something I was told a while back. Sometimes in order to get what we want, we have to leave our morals at the door.

From what I had gathered so far, Hopper and Joyce had something going on, and it wasn't just a hook up here and there. Will went missing, Hopper found him, problem solved right? Yet this kid's friends were still looking for someone else, another kid that went missing? The way he shrugged off any mention of that lab and Will's disappearance, it was not sitting right with me.

I was trying to piece the fracture parts together as quickly and as sanely as I could. Without getting too far down the rabbit hole as they say. The Chief instantly attracted my attention and I wasn't sure whether it was for a good reason or bad, either way....what ever he's doing, I'll find out, I always do. I knew I had to gain his trust, in more ways than one.

Instead of being distant and somewhat insubordinate, maybe being the best cop I could be and befriending him was my option. I knew the guy liked chasing tail, I wondered if that would work in my favour.

Or perhaps keeping distant and watching from the shadows would work better. I had to stop planning and get ready for work. Time as always caught up with me and it was time to go back to the night shift. My tired reflection said it all, I gently patted the dark bags under my eyes and shook my head. I popped back in my bathroom and decided to soften my edges, just a little.

I kept my head down as I walked into the station, but as always all

eyes were on me so it didn't matter much. I smiled at everyone silently and hung my coat up.

“You trying to impress someone Beckett?” Flo caught me off guard I jumped a little and laughed nervously.

“Well I looked a little too rough around the edges so I thought I'd....is it really noticeable?” I touched my freshly blushed cheek, unsure if it was my pink blush or the blood that was ever so rapidly rushing to my skin.

“You look lovely, but maybe next time, a little less” she patted my shoulder and I couldn't help but roll my eyes and groan. My body began to tense up in the worst way, I wished I could just go home and wash this crap off my face, I had no idea what I was thinking. Before I could duck out, Hopper entered the bullpen and stared directly at me. I tucked a loose strand behind my ear and tried to avoid his gaze. I felt him stomp towards me. I let out long quiet breaths I kept fiddling with the coffee pot. I noticed he was in his street clothes still, Perhaps he had left something. Didn't matter he was still here and still making his way towards me.

“Expecting someone?” he pointed to my face then smirked like a cheeky child. I scoffed and sucked in my bottom lip, turning it even pinker.

“Does it bother you?” I finished pouring my coffee and began to sip it nonchalantly, my eyes darting in his direction. He didn't answer right away, just looked back at me, his eyes with this almost terrifying glaze to them. He just laughed and shook his head, then squeezed past me to reach a filing cabinet. My stomach ached and my skin felt hot to the touch, I needed to get away, but as my shift was starting I couldn't very well leave now. It seemed somewhat clear that I had caught the Chief's eye, he even looked back at me once more before heading out the door. I could feel the others glaring at me, their eyes like lasers beaming into the back of my skull. I shook it off and exhaled deeply.

I had made the decision to go with the option of seduction. It could get me fired or get me a promotion, but the end goal was to find out the truth, about Hawkins...about Jim Hopper and most importantly

what he and Joyce Byers were hiding, or who.

I kept to myself the whole evening, Miller and I had a brief chat but it was cut short by another call, however it was nothing like the night before. Drunken teenagers fucking and drinking in public. There were moments as I was being spat at and screamed at by an hysterical 17 year old girl that I debated even staying, heading on back to the city and begging for a job at the precinct back home. And as I restrained the girl and shoved her into the back of the cruiser I kept thinking about that kid, the lab, Hopper....no matter how much I tried to fight it, I needed to know. The detective in me was clawing to get out, and I wanted to let her out so badly.

"Now we can either book em' and lock them up in the cell, call their parents to pick them up OR we can just drive them home and let their Mom's and Dad's handle em" Miller lent on the roof of the cruiser and looked at me with tired eyes. He'd struggled with the boy a little, although I thought about helping, I thought best not to interfere.

"She spat at me, she's going in a cell for a little while" I sharply replied slamming the palm of my hand on the roof. He nodded in agreement, much to my pleasure.

"Any of these kids look familiar to you" I asked curiously before we entered the cruiser. He quickly glanced into the back seat then back at me.

"Not by face, but once I get their names I might" I nodded silently and left it at that. I'd hoped they were another link in my chain of Hawkins mysteries, but alas. Still, it was something to do for a little while at least. Processing took a while in Hawkins Police Station ,a curse and a blessing in such situations.

By 4am I was washing the make-up off my face with warm water and paper towels. My face burned from the scratchy paper rubbing against my cheeks, but it's all I had. I kept picturing the look he gave me, that kinda wanting yet....dark look. The lack of sleep was clearly playing havoc with my emotions because I began to feel....a tingle. I even found myself pulling at the ends of my hair. It scared me a little, but like someone said once. Gotta leave those morals at the door....

7. Getting Closer

Summary for the Chapter:

Emily has time to process her choices to pursue some kind of relationship with Hopper, but after a close encounter she begins to regret the decision.

My fingers itched with excitement, I was dialling my Mom's number. I had put off calling her purely because it was still so raw, being away from her. But after the night shifts and the interest I've recently taken in the towns history I needed some normality, and she was it. I called her from bowling alley, the owner would rather me use his phone in the bar than hook one up in my apartment....seems fair. It was early so there wasn't a soul around to take interest in my conversation. I lent in a doorway and waited with bated breath as it rang...and rang....and rang.

"Hello?" her soft voice indicated she had been woken up, it wasn't that early was it I thought for a moment. But I didn't care really, I was too excited.

"MOM" I screamed down the phone.

"Emily...OH EMILY I thought you'd forgotten about me" I pressed my hand against my mouth trying to swallow my overwhelming joy at hearing the voice of the only person that mattered to me.

"Yep, it's me" tears burned my eyes and my cheeks as they rolled down them. "I thought I'd catch you before work, sorry I've been a little radio silent, its been hard"

"Don't apologise, I can't imagine you're having the best time sweetheart" I laughed, she was right.

"I just miss you so much, I miss the city, I miss the noise and the smell, it's not the same" I wiped my cheeks with the back of my hand and sniffed unbecomingly.

"I bet you feel like you've been flipped upside down"

"This whole town feels like its upside down Mom" I laughed again, then more tears fell.

"So how are things at work? What is your boss, the other officers" My smile faded as I pondered over the thought of Chief Hopper, and my fellow officers. My silence gave my Mom cause for concern as she called out to me.

"Their a little boring but, nice...." that's all I could say on them. I wasn't going to delve into everything with her, not now, maybe eventually but not while I was so emotional. We chatted about the good times, told her how the car was holding up, Dad then got mentioned and we both got a little upset. It was nice, it was...normal, it felt like I was at home again. But that soon faded the second I put down the phone and looked around me. I eyed up the Bourbon next to me on a shelf, then skimmed past it like it was nothing. There wasn't time to become a drunk, I had shit to do.

It seemed like I had been working at the station for years after my night shifts were done. Like I was in this alternate reality where I had been this small town cop for years, known for being crass but for getting the job done. Either way when I moved back onto the day shifts, it was a sweet relief. After a couple off days, those of which I spent driving around town, getting a good feel of the place, I was back in the station, and back working days with Hopper.

I decided to wear make-up again, but not so heavy this time. I was getting much nicer looks the second time around, even from Callahan. But he wasn't who I was trying to attract, not even close. I waited patiently for Jim to stomp in as usual, with bated breath almost. I think it was becoming almost noticeable, Flo even caught me watching the doors as we shared a morning coffee with one another.

"You expecting prince charming to walk through the door sweetheart?" I smirked and chuckled softly under my breath.

"Just worried that when Hopper arrives he'll start barking orders at me, shutting down our morning meeting" I raised my mug towards her as she clinked the ceramic against my own.

"I wouldn't worry, he'll look right through us and go hide in his office, the last few days he's barely left it" I cocked my eyebrow with intrigue.

"Really? Bad bender do you think?"

"Maybe, but as he keeps showing up, life will resume as normal for him....for us" she took once last sip of her coffee then placed the mug down and went back to her desk.

Jim did not show up and it was way past midday. I seemed to be the only one who found it odd and frankly frustrating. I suggested we tried calling but the man apparently did not have a working telephone. I rolled my eyes as I watched Flo dismiss my worries.

"You said it yourself Beckett, bad bender...maybe he's just hit the wall and is taking a personal day" Flo watched me grab my jacket from the coat rack and my keys.

"He should be here, he's our superior"

"Beckett relax, I'm sure the town isn't going to fall into disarray without Chief Hopper here" Powell jested toward me. I simply rolled my eyes once more and asked Flo for Hopper's address.

"There is a chance he could have choked on his own vomit or something" Callahan adjusted his glasses.

"Nice....I'm going, hopefully with Hopper in tow" They still protested, but as I hurried out the door I heard Powell shut them all down.

"Let her go and get yelled at, she needs to learn one way or another"...

It felt like Hopper didn't even live in Hawkins, his beat up trailer was miles away from anyone else. Suited him perfectly really, the broken cop routine was his troupe, why not add a sad location to boot. Both his car and Police Blazer sat out front, blinds shut. The idea of his bloated corpse lying on the floor crossed my mind, damn Callahan and his twisted imagination. I checked for my gun, then did my best to control my breathing. I was fine the whole way there. Cool and collected. As soon as I started walking up to his door, I thought my heart was going to burst from my chest. My hands got so clammy

again. Fuck. I cursed myself then knocked on the door. I stepped back and put my hand cautiously over my gun.

"Chief....CHIEF it's Beckett" I waited for a bit....tried to see if I could see in the trailer. Then I knocked again.

"Jim it's Emily" I heard something knock over in the trailer, I gripped my gun and stepped even further. I was scared, at the time it was the most terrified I had been in my entire life. The door opened carefully, not abruptly or aggressively. Jim stood in the door way with a look of both intrigue and frustration. We wore a long sleeved black jersey and his hair was a mess. I couldn't smell any booze, but I'm sure he had been drinking.

"What are you doing here Beckett? Is there an emergency at the station?" I wanted to slap him and tell him to sort his fucking self out. But I remembered what my intentions were, so I remained submissive, like a good subordinate.

"Sir you didn't turn up for work, I was worried" I took my hat off and to give him a better view of my face. My smile was fake as hell but to him it was warm and inviting. I thought he was going to shut the door in my face. But he looked over his shoulder then back at me with something that resembled a smile.

"I appreciate the concern Beckett, as you can see I'm alive and well"

"Yeah...I see that" I pushed my tongue against the inside of my cheek. "So are you coming in today or are we taking a "personal day" Sir"

"Something came up, I meant to call but...no phone still" he looked down at me, swinging on the door a little, was he drunk? At this point I wasn't sure. "I'll be back tomorrow ok?"

"Just wanted to make sure you weren't in trouble, they all said you'd yell at me"

"I'm not always a mean asshole, want to come in a warm up for a minute before I kick your ass back to work?" He stepped out of the way, inviting me in. Was it really going to be that easy I thought to myself slipping past him.

"Thanks Chief" What I saw wasn't much different to what I had in my

head. Beer cans and empty pill bottles across the table. Clothes screwed up on the floor, plates and dishes stacked up unceremoniously next to the sink. He caught my eyes darting around the room and cleared his throat to grab my attention.

“Can I ask what came up?” I gripped my hat tightly as he shook his head lighting a cigarette. “Roger that” I stepped over some dirty clothes and looked at the couch, it looked like it had been torn to shreds then sewn back up, poorly I may add. Butterflies, I felt them going mad in my stomach. I began to walk over to the bathroom, the door was shut which instantly caught my attention.

“Take a seat, I’ll make you a drink” I stopped my trek to the closed door and turned to face him.

“Depends on what kind of drink” he scoffed and scratched his chin. “I’m fine Chief, thanks anyway....I should head back, like you said....got work to do right?” He towered over me, and it was the first time since I had met the Chief that I felt intimidated. The way that cigarette hung from his lips and the smirk that came with it....It was getting harder and harder to hide my nervousness.

“Sure you can’t stay?” god he was drunk, that shine in his eye, the sway, I felt ill. I backed away quickly shaking my head.

“Sure so you can just give me shit at work tomorrow for it” I pulled my hat back on my head and darted for the door. I was really good at faking it, but that advance, so soon.... I was a little worried he may have been calling my bluff but either way, this wasn’t the time nor the place.

“Drive safe....thanks for stopping by....and don’t tell the boys I was...nice to you” He winked at me and I wanted to curl up and die. I feigned a smile and gave a bat of my eyelashes before I left the shit hole that he called home.

I sat in my car trying to hold back any tears, the self loathing I felt was unbearably painful. I needed a drink....regardless of what I kept telling myself....it was time to get black out drunk...just for one night. Make a note of the Chief’s closed bathroom door and shifty behaviour later....go get a drink girl....soothe your pain....

8. Almost had him

Summary for the Chapter:

Hopper follows Emily, leaving the two of them conflicted about what they both want.

I nursed my watered down beer as the sounds of the pins crashing around me were oddly comforting. Hopper swirled through my mind uncontrollably, the secrets this little town hid filled me with desire I never thought I'd have again. Hawkins, you surprise me still.

I glanced to the left of me as I noticed the doors swing open. Jim Hopper walked in, a brown coat and blue and black plaid shirt, it was oddly comforting, but the fact that he had spotted me and was walking my way....was not. He must have followed me here when I left work. He either had an idea what I was doing and was here to put an end to it, or he was trying to get lucky, either way; I was too tired to fight with my morals tonight, I just wanted to drown my sorrows in some peace.

With a half smoked cigarette dangling from his lips he made it to the bar, and pulled up a stool beside me.

"Beckett" He mumbled to me as he waved over the bartender.

"Fancied a change from drinking home alone Chief?"

"I'll overlook what you just said and I'll get the next round in, but no beer....it's 9pm Beckett loosen up" I shook my head laughing as I downed the rest of my stale pint.

"Fine" I glanced at the selection of booze "They got any Walker?"

He peered over the bar and nodded slightly.

"Two Walkers, double" Hopper slammed his notes on the bar then turned to face me a little more. I decided to remain facing ahead. Why the fuck was he buying me drinks. I balled my fists and hoped the booze would calm my nerves.

"You're a good cop Beckett, I knew that the second I met you....you're

punctual, respectful, so SO smart....but my god why are you here? You should be in some DEA task force or....a city Detective”

“At first I thought it was some kind of punishment, for my pride....but....I dunno Hopper....”

“I can request a transfer back to the city if you want....” I pondered over the idea, but as I threw back my double Johnnie Walker I chuckled and somewhat rolled with the punches. Show him you're not intimidated girl.

“Seems like you're a little nervous that I'll take ya job Chief” I played around with him a little, was I flirting? I wasn't even sure myself.

“Beckett I'd be more worried about Flo taking my job”

“She'd do a better job” I smirked. “Sorry...did I overstep?” he shook his head with this half hearted smile on his face then looked at me, his eyes were a soft blue and my god they were full of....pain and sorrowfulness, but they looked at me kindly, for the first time since we had met and I didn't hate it. My lips twitched into a sweet smile, then it faded as I held my hand up to call the bar tender over.

“Mick just leave the bottle” Hop interjected before I could even speak, I sucked my bottom lip in tightly as I watched him slip some cash into Mick's hand and just like that the Walker was all ours.

“When I worked in the City, I saw some pretty nasty things...sometimes I would come home to my Wife and Daughter and just.... stay with them, make sure they were safe” I clenched as he poured my drink, they had all told me about his ex-wife....and Sara his kid, they thought it was best so I didn't put my foot in my mouth so to say, but not once had I heard him mention them. My hands gripped the glass, my anxious demeanour was hard to hide, but I guess neither was my curiosity. “I felt like I could never protect them enough....funny how that turned out really”

“I'm sorry....” was all I can say. He snorted, chugged his drink in one and slammed the glass on the bar.

“Yeah sure you are, so you live upstairs?” I nodded once and pointed

to the back door.

"How can you listen to that while you're trying to sleep, the sound of those fucking pins falling are drilling through my damn skull" He slowly placed a cigarette between his lips, I watched it bounced up and down, mesmerized. God this booze was strong, I rubbed my eyes and sighed. Easy girl, take it slow.

"You wanna come up, finish that in peace?" having the Chief open up to me was giving me some kind of fucked up gratification and desire, I knew I wanted him to keep spilling his guts to me, I liked seeing him weak. He remained silent and said and did nothing. Hopper was contemplating my advance. I was terrified. Without warning he cleared his throat and nodded.

"Sure" he took the bottle in his grasp as we slowly made our way to my stairwell. His cheap cologne and stale smoke smell followed him everywhere, it was kind of nice after a while, that or I had been so starved of male attention that this man was beginning to appeal more than I thought.

The bitter air whipped around me ruthlessly, I shuddered instantly as I hurried up the metal stairs to my apartment, my hand shaking as I fumbled for the door. I burst in and instantly regretted this decision. Hopper cocked an eyebrow at the state of my place. I can just imagine what he was thinking, "how can someone so up tight live like this"

Empty beer bottles and pizza boxes placed around, he even noticed the dirty underwear on the floor by the bathroom. Reminded him of home I bet. I kicked the heater to get it going while I cussed repeatedly, I turned to see him leaning back on my couch, one arm across the back of it still smoking, watching me. I slipped off my sweater to reveal a plain navy t-shirt, I liked the way it hugged my frame.

Smoke was billowing from his dimly lit frame. In this light he wasn't too bad to look at.

Emily calm the fuck down I thought pulling at my hair nervously.

I slumped down next to him and snatched the bottle from his grip.

"I miss home" my voice was low and timid, maybe I was putting it on

a little, but I wanted to see if I could manipulate his very obvious taste in protecting women, a distorted hero complex was evident at this point, god I'm good at this. I took a hefty swig as I felt his blues burn into me.

“Who have you got back home?”

“My Mom” thinking about my Mom actually upset me, I felt so cold and lonely thinking about how far away she was now. I hugged my body shivering. In the corner of my eye I watched Hopper lift his hand up from his lap, but he was only gesturing for me to pass him the bottle, nothing more. So I obliged and waited for some words of wisdom.

“Maybe drinking alone at night isn't the best way to deal with that”

“Well, I'm not drinking alone am I...besides Chief it works for you....well” I shuffled in closer, getting a little more comfortable. He finished his smoke and threw the butt into one of the empty beer bottles.

“Circumstances very different Emily” He called me Emily and it sent a little buzz of excitement through me, was he drunk enough to decided Emily was appropriate, because I knew damn well none of this was.

“Look don't compare yourself to me, I'm a poor excuse for a human being, you....you're pure, sweet and I see so much good in you Emily” He swirled the bottle around, looking straight at me, I was warmed by his sentiment and couldn't hide my pleasure I guess, a smile crept across my lips and I started to pull my braid out, slowly my dark locks fell from their twisted mess and sat almost perfectly against my shoulders and back.

“Just full of compliments tonight aren't ya Hopper....” I caught him licking his lips, just for a second...but I saw that glint of lust in his eye. The more we drank the worse the decisions we were making were getting. I needed to stop this, I wasn't ready for this but yet....I said nothing

“I gotta ask, do you usually spend this much time with...anyone?”

“No....I don't....in fact I'm starting to see exactly how messed up this is going to get” He went to get up, I grabbed his arm, in a desperate attempt to make him stay.

“Emily...I'm your Chief” I pulled my hand away and looked away completely disgusted in myself.

“But it was my understanding that we were just having a friendly drink....right” I snapped back with a smart remark of course, it was a great coping mechanism. He chuckled and placed his hand on the back of my head.

“And it'll stay that way..,” He pulled himself up from my couch and left me slunk in the centre of it looking up at him. “I'll see you tomorrow, early alright?” He snatched his jacket and stomped towards my door. At this point I was hugging my knees against my chest, wishing something would drag me down into a pit.

“Yes Chief....Goodnight” I could barely look at him, and with one hard slam of my door he'd left. I exhaled heavily, grabbed a pillow and screamed into it uncontrollably.....